# Is the Employment of Army the Only Solution for Solving the Naxal Problem in India?

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# Abstract

IS THE EMPLOYMENT OF ARMY THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR SOLVING THE NAXALITE PROBLEM IN INDIA by MAJ Navneet Tanwar, Indian Army, 52 pages.

The monograph provides an in-depth analysis of the structural and ideological causes of Naxalism in India. Naxalism besides being a socio-economic problem is also politico-ideological response to the growing inequality in the Indian society. India's growth since independence has been unequal and skewed, a fact aggravated further, by a volatile mix of old, degenerated beliefs and rising materialism. Though democracy is deeply entrenched, empowerment has been as caste and regional groups, who often place their narrow parochial interests over the interests of the society and nation. This not only encourages nepotism and corruption but also affects governance and implementation at all levels .While Naxalism, fuelled by genuine, but mostly local and personal grievances, has made impressive gains, government policy efforts aimed at treating symptoms have proved to be inadequate . With the pool of dissatisfied ever increasing an integrated and holistic response aimed at changing the ethos and attitude of governance and population is essential. Within this holistic response, the army as an element of state power can be a part of a solution but not "The" solution for Naxalism.

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# Introduction

Insurgency remains an ill-defined term. The U.S. Department of Defense defines insurgency as, "An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict."[1] The underlying factor in this definition is the political nature of the objective. The movement or the struggle is against a particular form of political system. As Thomas A. Marks describes, "It is the conscious effort to supplant one political structure with another. Taken to its logical end, insurgency becomes a revolutionary war, the conscious effort to make a revolution by seizing state power using politico-military means."[2]

Maoist "People's War" has remained an inspiration for a large number of revolutionaries throughout the world. Revolutionary groups in Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Peru and Nepal have all, in varying proportions, modeled their struggles on a "People's War." However, most tend to ignore the specific structural conditions and political environment, which shaped and eventually led to Mao's success in China. The propensity to apply a successful model is often far too strong to resist and generally leads to neglect of Mao's implicit and in some cases explicit guidance to model struggles in existing social and cultural contexts. [3] It is therefore not surprising that except for Vietnam and to a certain extent in Nepal, Maoist insurgents all over the world have been unable to achieve their political goals.

In India, Maoist insurgency is also termed Naxalism. Naxalism derives its name from Naxalbari, a small village in Siliguri district of West Bengal where in 1967 a few landless farmers supported by followers of the communist party rose against the exploitation of landlords. This small yet significant incident marked a turning point in the history of the communist movement in India .What followed was

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1. U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication,*1-02.

2. Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 4.

3. Avijit Ghosh, "When I met Kanu Sanyal,"*Times of India,* March 23, 2010. http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/ Addictions/entry/ when-i-met-kanu-sanyal.(accessed September 28, 2010).

according to Kanu Sanyal, "an armed struggle –not for land but for state power."[4] The Naxal movement

since then, has ebbed and flowed but has never been comprehensively contained. In 2006, the Prime

Minister of India named Naxalism as the biggest internal security threat to India. Since then despite

government efforts, the Naxal movement continues to grow, and has now spread to nearly one third of the

country. Naxalism initially arose from the basic factors of social inequality, economic injustice and the

failure of the system to redress grievances of large sections of the society. However, simply extrapolating

these structural reasons for causes of insurgency would be an oversimplification. At the politico-

ideological level, Naxalism is also a reflection of an increasingly insensitive society, where ideals of

equality and justice are being subverted for personal greed and power.

Historically there was never a tradition of democracy in India. India was for most of its recorded

history a monarchy where, the monarch was ordained to rule as per dictates of Dharma.[5] Thus, while

science and rationality drove the western world, spirituality reigned supreme in India. The universal

adherence and concern for Dharma imposed self-discipline, which resulted in right conduct and action.

However, six to seven centuries of Islamic and British foreign rule led to a gradual decline of spirituality,

the degeneration of religious and social values was accompanied by a corresponding rise in greed and

materialism. Stripped of their innate logic, religions were reduced to mere symbolism - a reflection of

priestly interpretations, individual beliefs, and elaborate rituals. Upon independence, parliamentary

democracy was established. However, neither the political elite nor the masses were able to dump the

deep-rooted beliefs, traditions, and practices. Therefore, though democracy was adopted as a political

system, ideals of liberty, equality, and justice were not entirely assimilated.

As opposed to individualism in the U.S., social interdependence pervades the way of life in India.

Thus, rather than identifying self as a unique individual, people identify themselves with their family,

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4. Kanu Sanyal, "Report on the Peasant Movement in Terai Region," *Liberation*, November 1968, quoted in Prakash Singh, *The Naxalite Movement In India* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 1995). Kanu Sanyal along with Charu Mazumdar was the founding father of the Communist Party of India Marxist-Leninist.

5. The word Dharma is derived from the root DHR- to hold- and its etymological meaning is 'that which holds' this world, or the people of the world, or the whole creation from the microcosm to the macrocosm. It is the eternal Divine Law of the Lord', http://www.hinduism.co.za/dharma.htm.(accessed November 30, 2010).

caste and ethnicity. The family or social group closest to an individual becomes his primary source of power on which he depends not only for psychological needs but also for economic activities. This dependence gradually decreases as we move outward in the social groups. Thus, loyalty towards the family or clan is far greater than towards the society. Though selfish interests dominate interaction between individuals in the same social group these are easily set aside once the interest of the entire group is threatened.

The interdependence of individuals in the social group, leads to the inherent need of supporting one's group members over others, which result in intense group and caste rivalries. Hence, at the same time, there is both cooperation and competition amongst the various groups but at different levels. Quoting Yaneer Bar Yam, "Competition and cooperation will tend to support each other when they occur at different levels of organization, but they will generally be in conflict if they occur at the same level." [6] The rise of regional and caste based parties in politics, and apparent unity and patriotic fervor during times of national crisis and calamities, all substantiate this unique phenomenon.

The process of democratization in India has slowly but steadily empowered the marginal sections of the society. The empowerment though has not been as unique individuals, as in the West, but as social groups, communities, and castes. The understanding of the importance of caste in politics has empowered voices, which until now were feeble and inconsequential in the polity dominated by upper castes. Thus, as one author describes, "there is a pattern where individuals and groups expand inordinate energy to colonize or capture government institutions in seeking to promote their own interests over others. There is much activity in politics, but little of it is directed to public purpose that all can share."[7] Unfortunately, even this process of democratization has been neither comprehensive nor uniform. Marginal sections of the society particularly the dalits (untouchables) and the adivasis (tribals), because of their unique culture, economy, and socio-economic conditions were not a part of this empowerment. In the absence of an

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6. Yaneer Bar Yam, *Making Things Work* (US: NECSI, Knowledge press, 2004), 82-83.

7. Pratap Bhanu Mehta, *The Burden of Democracy* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2003), 129-130.

organized political institution to project their aspirations and grievances, they have continued to face depravation and exploitation, which over the years has resulted in a deep sense of alienation.

Naxals have not only exploited this alienation by espousing local demands but also seek to offer an alternative system of governance based on the ideals of Maoism. As one author argues, "The failure of the state to reach out to the poor and also its mal-governance leading to retreat of governance has resulted in a power vacuum as well as the space for the Maoist to strike roots and gain legitimacy among the impoverished."[8] Thus, continued mal-governance has resulted in a situation where the local government has started losing the confidence of the people, especially amongst the tribals and dalits in remote areas of the country.

The purpose of this monograph is to substantiate the fact that most insurgencies are a result of a government's inability to provide effective governance and hence address genuine socio-economic grievances of the people. Naxalism is a politico-ideological platform, which seeks to articulate the dissent and dissatisfaction of the deprived sections of the society. It is also a reflection of the society and Indian democracy, which has been unable to ensure equality and justice to all its citizens, which the constitution had so explicitly guaranteed.

The predominance of caste loyalties and parochial interests in every day affairs leads to nepotism and corruption and adversely affects good governance and development. Lack of democratic temperament and mal-governance has now become symbiotic, though governance is what can be easily addressed. Only an efficient and accountable government can address socio-economic issues, which fuel Naxalism.

Fundamental solutions are difficult, time consuming and often require a systemic shock. In the absence of the political will to deliver this shock, short-term and symptomatic solutions are often advocated which help in shifting the burden for a while. The most recent manifestation of this trend has been the demand for employment of the army to fight Naxalism. Employment of the army is the

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8.  Bidyut Chakarbarty and Rajat Kumar Kujur, *Maoism in India: The Reincarnation of Ultra Left Wing Extremism in the Twenty First Century* (New York: Rutledge, 2010), 04.

prerogative of the government and often its last resort. However, before the taking a decision to employ the army it should be clearly understood that it is a blunt tool, which in absence of a coherent policy and effective strategy is more likely to be counterproductive, particularly when employed against own citizens, who though misguided may have genuine grievances.

# Methodology

The research methodology used to study Naxalism in India will be a combination of analysis, synthesis, and assessment. An analysis of specific factors, which fuel and support insurgency will lead to a synthesis of the structural conditions, ideology, and the process, followed by an assessment of government policies and actions. The four major components of the monograph - the structural conditions; the genesis and growth of Maoist movement including- present organizational structure, strengths and weaknesses; the government response ,and the dynamics of employing the army will all aim at developing a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the insurgency. Based on the understanding developed, the last section of the monograph will include some recommendations for resolving the insurgency.

This research provides an overview of the specific structural conditions in India, their link to colonialism and their impact on the socio-economic condition of the masses. The specific social and cultural context of a nation has a bearing on the propensity for insurgency. Hence, structural conditions on their own do not breed insurgencies but more often than not require an external unifying force or ideology to mobilize the masses. Even then, insurgencies only grow and prosper because the government lacks penetration or has lost the confidence of the population owing to mal-governance, indifference or corruption.

The monograph also examines the genesis, growth, and division of the Indian communist movement into various parties including the ultra radical, Communist Party of India (Maoist), which is now the flag bearer of Naxalism in India. The study also focuses on the ideological struggle within the communist party while reconciling ideology to gain legitimacy, acceptance, and relevance in the Indian context. The resultant splits and the present structure, objectives, spread and activities of major Naxal groups will also be discussed. Finally, an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the movement will be carried out to gauge its likely impact on the stability and security of the nation.

The study of government actions since the resurgence of insurgency and reasons for their continued failure is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the problem. This understanding is vital before we discuss employment of the army or suggest changes in government policy. A policy or idea is only as good as can be implemented. The government efforts have primarily failed, not because of lack of good policies and strategies but because of the inability to implement these policies and reforms. The lack of effective implementation is not only a result of corruption and inefficiency, but also a reflection of the lack of democratic temperament in the society. Although democracy is deeply entrenched, ideals of equality and justice are prone to personal interpretations and are often subverted by the influential for personal gains.

Next, the employment of the army needs to be analyzed from two different perspectives. Firstly, the empirical issue of what it can realistically achieve, if deployed and secondly, the normative issues related to its impact on the insurgency and the army itself. The army as of now is already stretched thin due to its involvement in counter insurgencies in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast. Any additional involvement of army forces at this stage will not only have an adverse affect on the training and morale, but will also affect the overall defense preparedness of the nation especially with unsettled borders on two fronts.

Finally, based on the understanding developed an effort will be made to identify approaches, which can be employed to, contain and then reintegrate areas affected by Naxalism into the main stream. However, rather than suggesting radically new ideas, the focus will be on suggesting ways to improve foundational issues related to implementation and governance. In counterinsurgencies, it is often difficult to draw concrete lines between what is tactical and strategic, as small tactical actions have strategic implications. Hence, there is an inherent need to have a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the causes and impact of all military actions before any policy is framed and implemented.

# Socio-Economic Conditions in India

India is often known for its "unity in diversity." Despite differences in religion, culture, language, and ethnicities, it is perhaps the collective memories of British colonization and the innate quality of tolerance, which keeps India, united. As the Indian economy continues to grow and prosper, one critical problem remains unresolved, the sharp and growing regional variations among India's different states and territories in terms of per capita income, poverty, availability of infrastructure and socio-economic development. Eight low-income states – Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh [9] are home to more than one third of India's population and have more poor than 26 of the poorest African countries combined. Interestingly, all these states except Rajasthan lie to the east of the Kanpur line of disparity. The states lying on the eastern side of the line are considered backward in terms of income, growth, and human development. Not surprisingly, all these states are highly affected by Naxalism.

## The Colonial Legacy

During the colonial period, British policy was naturally focused towards the consolidation of British power in India. The political authority was neither interested in uniform development nor responsible to the governed. The resultant economic exploitation, which took place during this period, had two major impacts. First, it led to exploitation of the peasants and small farmers, and second, it set India on a path of skewed growth, where growth was concentrated to sectors, which helped colonial interests. Upon gaining independence in 1947, India retained the entire colonial legal system and adopted most of the bureaucratic traditions with minor changes. The British had introduced the principles of liberalism by piecemeal constitutional legislation to gain acceptance of their rule by the westernized middle classes. However, a bureaucracy trained to run the colonial administration and a judiciary rooted in colonial laws was unable to adapt to a Constitution whose objectives were very different from those of

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9. Press Trust of India, "8 Indian states have more poor than 26 poorest African nations," *Times of India*, July 12, 2010. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com /india/ 8-Indian-states-have-more-poor-than-26-poorest-African-nations. (accessed October 09, 2010).

a colonial administration. No principles of administration were developed nor where the bureaucrats reoriented, which would have allowed the society to proceed towards the transformation provided for by the Constitution.

The new inexperienced government faced a daunting task of balancing the requirement of rapid economic development while addressing the socio-economic inequality. The government chose a model of state led development, which was an effort to reconcile socialistic ideals with economic growth. However, half a decade of "Permit Raj," a complex system of licenses and controls over production investment and trade, state ownership of major industries, and rejection of international commerce left the economy on the brink of bankruptcy.[10] The Indian economy was neither able to flourish like a capitalist economy nor was it able to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the poor. The balance of payment crisis in the nineties finally led to slackening of government control and adoption of a new industrial policy. Ever since then  buoyed by the growing demand of the middle class, the Indian economy continues to grow at an impressive rate of nine percent and is poised to become the second largest economy after China by 2043.[11]

## Economic Inequality

The growth however, has not been inclusive and equitable. While a few have benefitted tremendously from the economic boom, the majority continue to languish in abject poverty. A World Bank report suggests that there are still 456 million people living under the poverty line (US $ 1.25 per day) in India.[12] Though the percentage has reduced considerably since independence, it still constitutes

10. Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, *The Commanding Heights: The Battle for World Economy* (New York: Free Press, 2002), 213-215.

11. Goldman Sachs, *Global Economics Paper* No: 152, January 22, 200. http://www.usindiafriendship.net /viewpoints1/ Indias_Rising_Growth_Potential.pdf. (accessed October 20, 2010).

12. The World Bank, *India Country Overview* September 2010. http://www.worldbank.org.in/ WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ SOUTHASIAEXT/INDIAEXTN. (accessed October 20, 2010).

about 32.7 % of the population.[13] Nearly 75% of the poor, comprised of mostly daily wagers, self-employed householders and landless laborers, live in rural areas. Nearly 80% of the dalits and 92% of the adivasis constitute these rural poor. Agriculture and allied sectors like forestry, logging, and fishing employ 52 % of the work force but account for only 17% of the GDP. Productivity remains low, primarily due to illiteracy, slow progress in implementing land reforms and inadequate or inefficient finance and marketing services for farm produce. Lack of irrigation facilities, reliance on monsoons and small land holdings further add to problems of productivity. Despite a steady decline of its share in the GDP, agriculture is still the largest economic sector and plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic development of India. The average unemployment rate in India exceeds nine percent. More than 85% of the labor force is employed in the unorganized sector, which does not provide for social security and other benefits of employment as in the organized sector.

## Corruption and Governance

Corruption, a symptom of falling values and increasing greed in the society, is an important factor, which affects both governance and administration. While on one hand, it denies the marginalized sections of the society, their rightful due, on the other it prevents effective implementation of government policies by subverting the delivery mechanism. As per the reports of Transparency International, India ranks 85th in the list of most corrupt nations.[14] According to a former Chief Vigilance Commissioner [15] "In the past, a corrupt individual was looked down upon by society, since being corrupt was generally agreed to be an undesirable trait. There was definitely a social stigma attached to being corrupt.

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13. Planning Commission of India, *Report of the Expert Group to Review the Methodology for Estimation of Poverty* (Planning Commission: November 2009). http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/genrep/rep_pov.pdf. (accessed March 15, 2011).

14. Transparency International. *Global Corruption Report*: 2009 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).http://www.transparency.org/ publications/gcr/gcr_2009.(accessed October 22,2010).

15. Central Vigilance Commission in India was established in 1964 to guide the government agencies in the field of vigilance against corruption.

Unfortunately, in the recent years, this stigma is no longer attached to being corrupt, and it is increasingly socially accepted."[16]

The rampant corruption in the society directly affects governance. Lamenting about the lack of governance, a commentator has argued that, " If the state, over vast tracts of its territories where significant proportions of its population  dwell, fails to provide the public goods and services that it is obliged to including the security of life and property, criminal justice and opportunities for social and economic growth - it is inevitable that other individuals and agencies will step in to fill the vacuum ." [17] The reasons for the lack of values and ethos in public behavior are varied and range from social interdependence to corruption, lack of incentives and transparency, traditional religious beliefs, and lack of democratic temperament.

## Religion, Caste and Gender Issues

India is a secular country and contains the majority of the world's Zoroastrians, Sikhs, Hindus, Jains and Bahai'is. After Indonesia and Pakistan, India is also home to the third largest Muslim population in the world. Nearly eighty percent of the population practices Hinduism, because of its henotheistic nature and resultant freedom of belief and practice it is one of the most tolerant religions in the world. Except for a few symbolic and universal beliefs and practices, there are surprisingly few obligations or strictures. However, coupled with this the deeply entrenched beliefs that all events that occur are predestined, position in society is a function of accumulated past merits, and the possibility of atonement owing to God's benevolence has shaped the attitude and conduct of many Indians in a negative manner. While on one hand it propagates corruption by preventing people from holding each other accountable, on the other it provides a solution to the internal ethical dilemma of doing something against Dharma.

16. AFP, "One in Three Indians 'Utterly Corrupt': Former CVC," *Times of India*, September 8, 2010, http://timesofindia. indiatimes.com  /india/One-in-three-Indians-utterly-corrupt-Former-CVC/articleshow /6518255.cms. (accessed October 20, 2010).

17. Ajay Sahni, "Counterinsurgency; Some Myths and Principles, "South Asian Terrorism Portal. http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/ajaisahni/2010/presantionjune2.htm. ( accessed October 20,2010).

Misinterpretation and personal understanding of traditional beliefs has led to the degeneration of many customs in Hinduism. The caste system is one such custom, which though being challenged in many urban areas, continues to remain deeply entrenched in the social fiber of the rural society. Years of exploitation and discrimination by upper castes has led to a deep-rooted resentment and alienation amongst dalits, who remain at the bottom of caste pyramid. Dalits, who constitute 16% of the Indian population, continue to face wide-ranging economic and social disadvantage, humiliation, and violent atrocities in India. Lacking access to mainstream political organizations and increasingly frustrated with the pace of reforms, dalits have now begun to resist subjugation and discrimination both by way of peaceful protest and armed struggle. It is not surprising that Naxal organizations advocating the use of violence to achieve land redistribution have attracted widespread dalit support. However, the primary cause of discontent amongst dalits lies in the age-old caste based social order, which condemns them to a life of depravation, servility, and indignity.[18]

Related to caste is the aspect of gender inequality in the Indian society, as per the report of World Economic Forum (WEF) India ranks 114th as far as gender equality is concerned.[19] Women, particularly in rural areas, are still denied equal rights on various pretexts related to religious sanctions, customs and social values. Surprisingly this aspect is not just confined to any specific religious or social group but is prevalent in most tribal and ethnic groups as well. The attraction for women towards Naxalism, thus, goes far beyond ideology and local grievances. For nearly 40 % of Naxal cadres who are women it is also a path to empowerment and emancipation from century's old social prejudices.

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18. Planning Commission of India, *Report on Development Changes In Extremist Affected Areas* (Planning Commission: April 2008), 4. http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports /publications/rep_dce.pdf. (accessed October 20, 2010).

19. "Gender equality? India ranks a poor 114th." http://business.rediff.com/report/2009/oct/27/wef-india-ranks-a-poor-114th-in-gender-equality.htm.(accessed October 22, 2010).

**Ethnic Differences**

India's ethnic history is extremely complex, and distinct racial divisions between people are difficult to discern. The more than 2000 ethnic groups that inhabit India can be broadly divided as Indo-Aryans, Dravidians, Mongoloids and the adivasis (tribals). The adivasis, residing in the hilly regions, forests, and less-developed plains in India, constitute about 8 % of the Indian population. Representing relatively more backward forces of production, their economy, society, and culture differ significantly from the rest of the country and often put them in direct confrontation with the government on issues of forest rights and environment. Over the last century, all the tribal communities have had their political, social and economic life changed under the impact of the colonial administrative system. The colonial rule strategically ignored tribal rights for greater economic gains. After independence, in the enthusiasm to protect natural resources, the government continued with colonial legislation and adopted more internationally accepted notions of conservation rather than learning from the country's rich traditions where conservation is embedded in the ethos of tribal life.[20]

The adivasis have also been disproportionate victims of development in India. Large-scale displacement for dams, mines, and power projects coupled with inadequate rehabilitation and repeated coercion has resulted in their exclusion from the benefits of development. This has led to a deep sense of desperation and alienation amongst the adivasis, which often finds its voice in Naxalism. Naxals not only offers a forum to express their grievances but also offers an alternate system, which promises to be more equitable and just. Apart from poverty and deprivation other causes of the tribal movements include absence of self-governance, forest policy, land related issues, multi faceted exploitation, cultural humiliation, political marginalization, forced evictions from land, and displacement.[21]

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20.  Subhash Ghatade, *The Naxalite Left at the Beginning of the Millennium*. http://www.massline.info /India/Gatade.htm. (accessed November 20, 2010).

21. Planning Commission of India, *Report on Development Changes In Extremist Affected Areas*, 9.

# Genesis and Growth of Naxal Movement

## Birth of the Communist Movement

As one author has argued, to understand the genesis of the Naxal movement in India, one needs to locate it within the framework of the communist movement in India.[22] The Communist Party of India (CPI) was established in 1920. However, with its support base confined to the middle class elite, the party had a marginal impact on the national freedom struggle. Upon independence, driven by communist ideology the Party supported the formation of Pakistan and autonomy for provinces. These policy paradoxes, contrary to the popular perception of those times, projected the Party as anti-national to a vast majority in India.

The Party's decision to contest provincial elections in 1945 had ideologically polarized the party between those who believed in parliamentary politics and those who opposed. From, 1946 to1951, the Party leadership dominated by the radical faction, supported the peasant uprising, which took place against the autocratic rule of the Nizam (princely ruler of Hyderabad) in Telangana district of Andhra Pradesh. The movement though initially successful lost steam after the independence of India primarily due to the amalgamation of Hyderabad into the Indian Union and the establishment of a democracy.

The movement was ultimately withdrawn in 1951. However, the experiences of the Telangana movement further cemented the ideological divide, and facilitated formation of three distinct lines of communist movement in India. The first line rejected the significance of the Chinese revolution, and advocated the simultaneous accomplishment of the democratic and social revolutions based on city-centered working class insurrection. The second line propagated by the communists from Andhra Pradesh drew heavily from Chinese experiences and the teachings of Mao and finally the differences between the Chinese and Indian conditions promoted yet another albeit centrist line, which advocated parliamentary democracy.[23]

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22. Chakarbarty and Kujur. *Maoism in India*, 40.

23. Ibid, 40.

Retrospection of the Telangana movement led to a realization within large sections of the Party that Indian socio-economic and cultural conditions were unfavorable for an insurrection or revolution. This realization, despite some opposition, pushed the party and a majority of its members along the road to parliamentary democracy. The Indo-China war in 1962 and the resultant ideological divide led to the split of the party in 1964. While the original CPI believed in peaceful means and parliamentary system for achieving the objectives of a truly socialist state, the splinter group named the Communist Party of India Marxist, CPI (M) advocated the tactical use of parliament while working on an indigenous path of revolution.[24] However, disenchanted by the slow pace of reform differences arose within the CPI (M). The radicals led by Charu Mazumdar, the ideological father of the Naxal Movement in India criticized the party leadership and called them revisionist, whom he argued had betrayed the cause of Indian Revolution.[25]

## The Naxalbari Uprising

It was during this time that Naxalbari incident took place. Bimal Kissan, a tribal youth having obtained a judicial order, went to plough his land. The local landlords attacked him with the help of their goons. Tribal people of that area supported by communist workers retaliated and started forcefully recapturing their lands, what followed was a rebellion which soon acquired great visibility and support of communist revolutionaries from across the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.[26] The movement soon spread to a number of areas all over India including Srikaikulam in northeastern part of Andhra Pradesh. In Srikaikulam, the tribal Girijans had been protesting against the oppression of the landlords since 1961, Naxalbari incident sparked the revolt in Srikaikulam, which continued long after the uprising had been suppressed by strong police action in

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24. Bhabani Sen Gupta, *Communism in Indian Politics* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1972), 323-330.

25. "Selected Works of Comrade Charu Majumdar-Eight Documents," .http://cm-works.blogspot.Com/. (accessed September 10, 2010).

26. Chakarbarty and Kujur. *Maoism in India*, 41-42.

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Naxalbari. Thus, a small incident in Naxalbari was able to trigger a spate of unrest, which had been brewing from ages of depravation and exploitation.

Though the movement was contained, the radical elements that had supported the struggle formed the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCR) in 1968. "Allegiance to the armed struggle and non participation in the elections" were the two cardinal principles adopted by AICCR for all its operations. [27] However, like before there were differences on questions of class annihilation and manner of running the armed struggle. A section of activists led by Kanhai Chatterjee (from West Bengal) and T Nagi Reddy (from Andhra Pradesh) were of the opinion that the annihilation of class enemy should be undertaken only after building up of mass agitations. Despite their concerns, in 1968, the AICCR went ahead and formed the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) CPI (M-L). Kanhai Chatterjee, in turn, joined Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) or Dakshin Desh as it was then called, another Maoist outfit, which came into being at around the same time.

Charu Mazumdar, the general secretary of CPI (M-L) and the main protagonist of the new movement soon became a cult figure. The undeniable influence of Mao on his thoughts and ideology is easily discernable from his *Historic Eight Documents*,[28] which remain a source of inspiration and guidance to all Maoist revolutionaries in India. Unfortunately, Charu Mazumdar's charisma was also his undoing. He was not a pragmatic and grossly overestimated the dissatisfaction and socio-economic conditions in India. In his eagerness to bring a quick revolution, he failed to build mass organizations before resorting to guerilla war. His second mistake was his insistence on class annihilation even at the expense of alienating his own colleagues. The result was that in absence of any mass base the revolutionaries were soon neutralized, the ideological bankruptcy alienated the middle class and even the Chinese Communist Part, threatened to withdraw support and came out strongly against the leadership for

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27. Ibid, 42.

28. "Selected Works of Comrade Charu Majumdar-Eight Documents". http://cm-works.blogspot. com/.(accessed September 10, 2010).

having deviated from Marxism-Leninism. Charu Mazumdar's capture and subsequent death in 1972 almost led to the collapse of the CPI (M-L) and the Naxal movement.

## Splits and Mergers

The history of the movement after Mazumdar's death is marked by a number of splits brought about by personalized narrow perceptions about the Maoist revolutionary line and attempts at course correction by some of the major groups. Prakash Singh asserts existence of two sets of groups; one, which continued to owe allegiance to Charu Mazumdar and his ideology and other, which opposed it.[29] In 1974, a group of activists from the state of Bihar aligned to the ideals of course correction, renamed their group as CPI (M-L) Liberation. In 1976 during the emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister of India, it adopted a new line that called for the continuation of armed guerilla struggles along with efforts to form a broad anti-Congress[30] democratic front, consisting even of non-communist parties. The group also suggested that pure military armed struggle should be limited and that there should be greater emphasis on mass peasant struggles to adapt the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism and Mao to Indian conditions.

During the next three years, this new line caused further splits with N.Prasad forming CPI (M-L) Unity Organization in Bihar, and Kondapalli Seetaramahia forming the Peoples War Group (PWG) in 1980. PWG in particular discarded the total annihilation of the class enemies as the only form of struggle and stressed floating mass organizations. Since then, the principal polarization in the Naxal movement has been between the two perceptions, advanced by CPI (M-L) Liberation and the PWG. CPI (M-L) Liberation branded PWG a group of "left adventurists" who invite state repression on hapless people, while the PWG castigated the Liberation group as one of the "revisionists" imitating the CPI (M).[31]

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29. Prakash Singh, *The Naxalite Movement In India* (New Delhi: Rupa publications,1995),115

30. Congress Party of India. This is the oldest political party of India

31. Venkitesh Ramakrshnan,"The Road from Naxalbari," *Frontline*, October 21, 2005. http://www.flonnet. com/ fl2221/stories/20051021008801000.htm. (accessed October 25, 2010).

Throughout the history of the Naxal movement, there have been isolated efforts at fostering unity amongst the various groups .A major success was achieved in 2004 when the PWG and the MCC merged to form the Communist party of India Maoist, CPI (Maoist). The merger has not only given the movement an added impetus but has also drawn genuine concern from the state and central governments. The merger makes the CPI (Maoist) a pan-Indian revolutionary group, and brings the Naxals closer to their objective of liberating the proposed Compact Revolutionary Zone (CRZ), a homogenous area, which extends from Bihar in the North to Andhra Pradesh in the South. The formation of the CRZ will not only consolidate the Naxal movement but also facilitate easy movement of extremists from one zone to the other. Major fallout of this consolidation has been the disproportionate increase in the level of violence and ability of Naxals to undertake major offensive operations against the security forces. The attack on a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) column in April 2010 that killed 76 men in Chintalnar, Chhattisgarh bears testimony to their level of tactical skills and ability to launch large and coordinated military style operations.

## The Naxal's Roadmap for the Future of India

Naxalism is an ideological continuity from the past yet it is a contextual response to unique socio economic and cultural realities of India, which differ from state to state. In Andhra Pradesh, the Naxals draw upon the anti-feudal sentiments, in Bihar, they draw upon the caste divisions and exploitation, while in Orissa and Chhattisgarh it is the right over forest produce, which remains the most effective demand for political mobilization. Though political causes may differ from state to state, the ideological underpinnings, which Naxals articulate, are clear and uniform. A joint statement issued soon after the formation of CPI (Maoist) in 2004 articulated :-

> "The immediate aim and program of the Maoist party is to carry on and complete the already ongoing and advancing New Democratic Revolution in India as a part of the world proletarian revolution by overthrowing the semi-colonial, semi-feudal system under the neo-colonial form of indirect rule, exploitation and control. This revolution will be carried out and completed through armed agrarian revolutionary war. i.e. protracted people's war with the armed seizure of power remaining as its central and principal task, encircling the cities from the countryside and thereby

finally capturing them. Hence the countryside as well as the Protracted People's War will remain as the "center of gravity" of the party's work, while urban work will be complimentary to it."[32]

The five documents drafted by the Central Committee, *Hold High the Bright Red Banner of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism*, *The Party Program*, *Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution*, the *Political Resolution on the International and Domestic Situation* and the *Party Constitution*, lay down the objectives and strategy to be adopted by the CPI (Maoist).[33] In *The Party Program*, the Party points out that in India the ruling classes, subservient to imperialism, have transformed the country into a prison-house of nationalities under the so-called slogan of "unity and integrity."

*The Strategy and Tactics of Indian Revolution,* explains the character of Indian society. Naxals claim that a concrete class analysis of Indian society will reveal that the character of Indian society is semi-colonial and semi-feudal. There are four major contradictions in the present day Indian society. First, there is the contradiction between imperialism and the Indian people. Next, there is the contradiction between feudalism and the broad masses. Finally, there follows the contradiction between capital and labor, and the internal contradictions among the ruling classes based on regional and parochial interests. Out of these four major contradictions, feudalism versus the broad masses of the people is the principal contradiction. The document further explains that the Indian revolution has to be carried out in two stages, the new democratic stage followed by the socialist stage. The immediate task of the present stage of the revolution would be to arouse and organize the people, in a planned way, for agrarian revolutionary guerrilla war in the countryside especially in the remote countryside, which is most favorable for the building up of the guerrilla war, the people's army and the base areas. Another task would be to build up the people's army and the rural red base areas through guerrilla warfare.

The new constitution of the Party is based on the Bolshevik principles of democratic centralism, with the core comprising of professional revolutionaries. The three magic weapons for ushering a

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32. South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Joint statement issued by CPIM (Maoist) in 2004." http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/ countries/india/ terrorist outfits/CPI_M.htm. (accessed October 25, 2010).

33. CPI (Maoist), *Five Documents.* http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs /index. htm#2009.(accessed October 15, 2010).

revolution in India will be the Party, the people's army and the United Front. Party building is to be the primary activity in the direction of new democratic revolution in India. According to the proposed constitution :-

> "A wide network of part timers will facilitate the Party to exist deep within the masses. It will be underground for the entire period of the New Democratic Revolution and its members will comprise the cream of society— principled, selfless, courageous, dedicated, modest, hard working and fully committed to the cause of the Indian revolution and to socialism and communism. All members will put the interests of the Party and the people before their own personal interests. It will continuously view itself and its members self-critically in order to correct non-proletarian tendencies that inevitably enter the party and seek to corrupt it from within. The ideological basis of the Party is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism."[34]

The people's army would be composed of three forces. The first is the main force comprising of special action teams and battalions that move anywhere to participate in the war depending upon the need of the movement. The second two are the secondary force comprising of the local guerilla squads, special guerilla squads, and district level action teams, and the basic force comprising of the peoples militia at the village and sub-division level. As of now, the Peoples Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA) is still under formation. However, reports suggest that Naxals, who earlier used to operate in dalams (groups) of 15-20 cadres, are now organized in a military style hierarchy of squads, platoons, battalions, and divisions.[35]

As per the Naxal understanding, there should be a formation of a united front of four classes –the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeois, and the national bourgeois. In building the front, the guiding principle would be that the proletariat should play the vanguard role. In realizing the importance of united front, the Naxals appear to have learnt from their past mistakes where in their eagerness to foster quick revolution mass organizations were generally neglected. The Naxals also realize the importance of expanding their ideology into the urban areas. The document titled *Urban Perspective*

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34. South Asian Terrorism Portal, *Maoist Documents.* http://www.satp.org/satporgtp /countries/India /maoist/documents/papers/partyconstitution.htm. (accessed October 15, 2010).

35. Presley Thomas, "Red Strom Rising," *Hindustan Times,* February 7, 2009. http://naxalwatch.blogspot.com/2009/02/red-storm-risingred-storm-rising.html.(accessed October 25, 2010).

*Plan* [36] stipulates three kinds of activities in urban areas. The first is to mobilize and organize masses and build the party. This is to be achieved by espousing the demands of special social groups like women, dalits, and religious minorities and relating their grievances with party membership. The second task is building up the united front by unifying the working class, building worker-peasant solidarity and building fronts against globalization, Hindu fascism, and repression. Finally, the plan entails carrying out military tasks like infiltration of government ranks and organizations, sabotage, and logistic support in consonance with the PLGA.

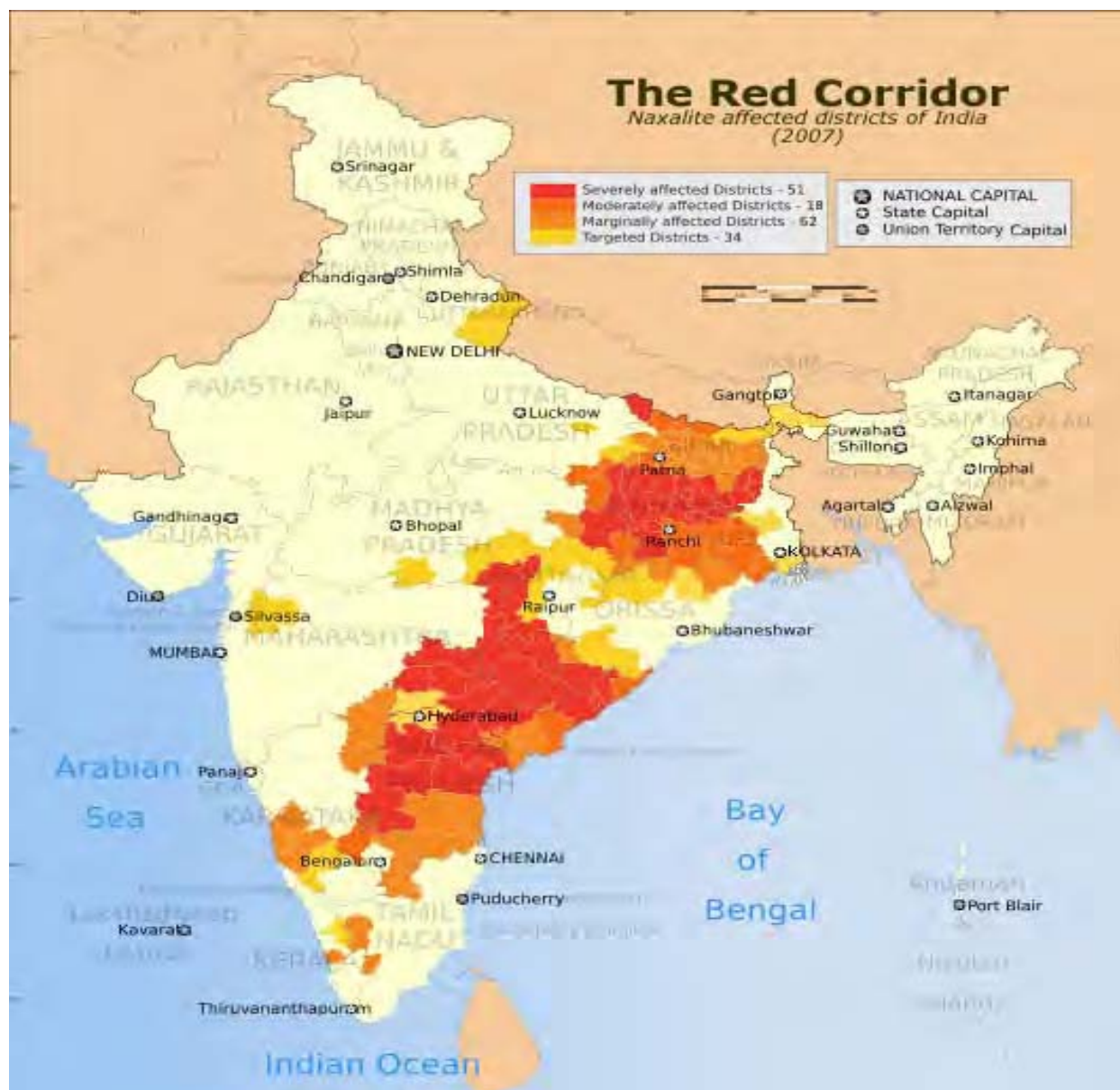## Spread, Organization, and International Links

As per government sources, Naxalism affects around 223 districts spread across 16 states.[37] The spread is generally along the CRZ however, there are two major concentrations. The first is around Dandakaranya, to include the contiguous forested regions of - Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh and the second comprising of the contiguous regions of Jharkhand and Bihar. The centre of Dandakaranya region is Abujmarh, which means unknown highlands in the local language. This 4,000 square kilometers remote area, inhabited by approximately 27,000 Maria tribals has no roads or railways and is generally inaccessible for more than six months in a year.[38] This remote area has not been surveyed since the time of the British and ironically finds mention in the Gazette of 1908 as an area reserved for refugees. This area serves not only as the base area but is also the nerve centre for all the major training and planning activities. Similar remote areas exist in Saranda and Gaya in Jharkhand and Bihar respectively.

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36. South Asian Terrorism Portal, *Urban Perspective Plan.* http india/maoist/documents/ papers/ Urbanperspective.htm. (accessed October 25, 2010).

37. Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, "Taking On Maoist," *Frontline*, November 6, 2009. http://pay.hindu .com/ebook% 20-%20ebfl20091106.pdf (accessed November 20, 2010).

38. Planning Commission, *Report on Development Changes In Extremist Affected Areas*.28

The Red Corridor
Naxalite affected districts of India
(2007)

Severely affected Districts - 51
Moderately affected Districts - 18
Marginally affected Districts - 62
Targeted Districts - 34

NATIONAL CAPITAL
State Capital
Union Territory Capital

Source: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies

The total strength of CPI (Maoist) is about 10,000 cadres who are adept at guerilla warfare with another 45,000 over ground cadres. They are equipped with an arsenal of up to 20,000 modern weapons, which include modern assault rifles and explosives.[39] In addition, they have a large number of unspecified locally made firearms and traditional weapons.

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39. G S Radhakrishnan, "Maoist Gun Count 20000," *The Telegraph*, December 01, 2010. http://www.telegraphindia.com/1101201/jsp/nation/story_13243635.jsp. (accessed November 30, 2010).

Broadly, all Naxal groups operate underground and organize into two components –a political wing and an armed wing. The central committee (CC) is the highest executive authority of the political wing. Below the central, committee are special area committees/state committees /special zonal committees, which have a number of divisional /zonal/district committees, followed by sub-zonal/sub divisional committees, area/local level-village/slum/college/factory committees, and finally the lowest level of the party structure is the cell, defined as the nucleus of the organization. [40] The village committees often work through village level associations called Sangham. There are two main mass organizations working at present in the Dandakaranya region. These are the Dandakaranya Adivasi Mazdoor Kisan Sanghatanam and the Krantikari Mahila Adivasi Sanghatanam.

There is in addition the Chaitanya Natya Manch an organization involved in spreading Naxal ideology through street plays and Bal Sangham an association of children aged between six and twelve who are involved in activities like intelligence gathering, propaganda, and courier duties. There are also reports of children being trained in firearms and formation of the Children's Liberation Army, a dangerous trend that can change the dynamics of the conflict and adversely affect an entire generation.[41] The military wing is subservient to the central committee. Headed by the central military commission, it controls the Peoples Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA). There are also military commissions at various levels in accordance with the political committees.

The Naxals, as of now, run parallel governments popularly known as Janthana Sarkar in the claimed liberated zone of Dandakaranya. The liberated zone is an area where Naxals run parallel governments. The Janthana Sarkar in Dandakaranya functions as per the written constitution and has a number of departments like agriculture, trade, economics, justice, defense, health, public relations, education and culture, and jungle.[42] Over many years, the Naxals, through their developmental work in

40. Chakarbarty and Kujur, *Maoism in India*,42

41. Rajat Kujur, "Child Soldiers of the Naxal Movement," http://www.ipcs.org/article/naxalite-violence/child-soldiers-of-the-naxal-movement-2738.html.(accessed November 20, 2010).

42. Arundhiti Roy, "Walking with the Comrades," *Outlook*, March29,2010. http://www.outlookindia.com/article. (accessed October 25, 2010).

the villages, have developed a large following and support base. Besides filling the role of a nonexistent government, they are also involved in social transformation of the society by working against social evils like caste, superstition, witchcraft, and prohibition. By these activities, they have been able to give the adivasis a distinct sense of identity and dignified existence.

Though ideologically they support development of villages, they are averse to construction of roads and infrastructure, which undermines their authority and support. This paradoxical situation may subsequently become difficult to explain. However, until the government starts competing for control these questions remain academic. The movement for sustenance draws upon illegal taxes from contractors, operation of illegal mines, sale of tendu leaves and other forest products, extortion from employees and collections from tribals. There are also unconfirmed reports of trade in opium and narcotics for generating funds.

CPI (Maoist) held its ninth Congress in 2007. Muppala Lakshman Rao, the General Secretary of the Party in a statement emphasizing the current ideology of the Party articulated:-

> "The Unity Congress reaffirmed the general line of the new democratic revolution with agrarian revolution as its axis and protracted people's war as the path of the Indian revolution that had first come into the agenda with the Naxalbari upsurge. It set several new tasks for the party with the main focus on establishment of base areas as the immediate, basic and central task before the entire party. It also resolved to advance the people's war throughout the country, further strengthen the people's army, deepen the mass base of the party and wage a broad-based militant mass movement against the neo-liberal policies of globalization, liberalization, privatization pursued by the reactionary ruling classes under the dictates of imperialism." [43]

Some of the important additions to the party documents and proposed actions were to advance the people's war, turning the Peoples Liberation Guerilla Army into People's Liberation Army, guerrilla war into mobile war, and the guerrilla zones into base areas. In wake of the deployment of massive forces by the Government of India to confront Naxalism, the Naxals have changed their strategy and are now focusing on mobile warfare. As part of their changed strategy, the Naxals aim to paralyze normal life by attacking the communication, transportation, railway and other essential establishments. They have also

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43. Chakarbarty and Kujur, *Maoism in India*,166

learnt that the economic development strategy of the country has created a sense of alienation among certain sections of society and have eyed such alienated groups.

The ninth congress also saw the adoption of resolutions against the state oppression against various nationalities, farmer suicides, rise of Hindu fascism, gender inequality, and the exploitation of dalits. As these statements would suggest rather than being dogmatic, the central leadership of the party is willing to learn from its past mistakes and adapt in response to the changing environment. Having realized the fragmented nature of the society and its inherent tensions, the Naxals are trying to rally the minorities and the oppressed with an aim of creating a broad coalition against the government.

There have also been efforts at fostering unity and coordination between all Maoist movements in Asia. As a result, Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties in South Asia (CCOMPOSA) was formed at the turn of the last millennium. What brings these revolutionary groups separated geographically together is the ideological belief in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the perceived need for a new democratic revolution. In 2007, during the fourth congress of CCOMPOSA in Nepal a resolution was adopted which underlined the need for the people's movements in South Asian countries to draw closer together and assist their respective struggles.[44] More than the ideological unity what is of greater concern to most governments is the likelihood of transfer of sophisticated weapons and explosives between these Maoist groups. Unconfirmed reports already point towards the growing cooperation and transfer of weapons from United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) to the Naxals. What's more worrying though is the reports of growing cooperation between Lashkar-e-Taiyyaba (LeT), a terrorist group based in Pakistan, responsible for Mumbai attacks and the Naxals. If confirmed it completely changes the dynamics of this problem and can become a major security concern. [45]

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44. South Asian Terrorism Portal," Press Statement of the Fourth Conference of CCOMPOSA." http://www.satp.org/ satporgtp/ countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/ccomposa2007.htm.(accessed November 20, 2010).

45. Ben West, "Pakistan and Naxalite Movement in India," *STRATFOR*, http://www.stratfor.com/ weekly /20101117_pakistan_and_naxalite_movement_india?utm. (accessed November 24,2010)

## Strengths and Weaknesses of the Naxal Movement

A critical analysis of the Indian socio-economic conditions and cultural environment will reveal an abundance of reasons for grievances and dissatisfaction amongst the masses. As one author remarks " In a highly stratified and long-stagnant society like India's , revolution should normally find a fertile soil, especially when the process of development begins to stir social causes long subjected to gross inequalities."[46] One of the main reasons this has not happened is because of the deepening of democracy in India. The democratic process has politically empowered large sections, even if as social and caste groups, to raise their grievances and concerns with the state. Naxalism has found deep roots in areas, where this empowerment has not taken place primarily due to lack of government penetration and long standing neglect and exploitation by the combination of local level, corrupt government officials and landlords.

Naxalism besides being a socio- economic struggle is also a reflection of the skewed growth trajectory of the Indian economy, which has made two different worlds, one affluent, vibrant, and well on path of being a super power and the other mired by corruption, mal-governance and stagnating in abject poverty. The reason for the rapid growth of Naxalism in certain regions is attributable to a number of interlinked factors. Foremost amongst these is the availability of remote areas, which serve as insurgent bases. Areas like Abujmarh in Dandakaranya and Saranda in Jharkhand due to forests, rugged mountains, inhospitable terrain and extreme climate inhibit government penetration.[47] Inaccessibility to these areas not only inhibits economic development but also provides safe havens and opportunities for the spread and expansion of Maoist ideology. The Naxals do not rush into areas propagating Maoism; they generally carry out reconnaissance of an area for years before moving in. Having understood the local grievances and demands they slowly link likely solutions to party membership and ideology. By representing local

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46. Gupta, *Communism In Indian Politics,* 349

47. Planning Commission , *Development Challenges in extremist AffectedAreas,* 56.

grievances, the insurgents are able to develop trust amongst the adivasis, which is essential for their security and growth of the movement.

Despite its vast ideological appeal, Naxalism remains confined to areas where, the government either lacks penetration or has lost the confidence of the local population to dispense justice. Naxalism derives strength from the inability of the government to administer large remote areas. Within these areas also, it is primarily the adivasis and the dalits who form the front line of the Naxals fighting forces. A majority of them seek personal and local redress rather than having any affinity to ideology. Thus while the genesis of Naxalism was based on peasant uprising and class struggle, now it primarily thrives on issues of displacement of adivasis near central regions of India and on dalit led caste struggle in areas adjoining Bihar and Jharkhand.

The second source of strength for the movement lies in its appeal amongst the marginalized sections of the society. In a document titled *Strategy and Tactics* the Maoist, argue that, "Women, dalits, adivasis, and religious minorities are the most important of the social sections to be taken cognizance of by the party of the proletariat leading the revolution in the concrete conditions prevailing in India."[48] These special sections are generally at the bottom of the heap, of caste and class, based society and continue to be deprived of the benefits of development.

In Chhattisgarh and Orissa, adivasis have been the worst victims of development. Thousands of adivasis have been displaced for large dams, power projects and mines. The Planning Commission appointed expert group has acknowledged that adivasis, who are just 8% of the population constitute nearly 40 % of those displaced. Furthermore, out of the total displaced, only a third have been rehabilitated until date.[49] In Bihar, the dalit driven Naxal movement has not remained a class struggle for the poor but degenerated into a caste conflict as cadre are created on the basis of hatred against the rich and influential castes. Large numbers of women are drawn to Naxalism not only as a response against

48. South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution". http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/ countries/India/Maoist/documents/papers/strategy.htm (accessed November 24, 2010).

49. Planning Commission, *Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas*, 15.

exploitation and deprivation but also because of the emancipation, it offers from traditional social exploitation. The raising of issues related to religious minorities, voice against perceived Hindu fascism and recent killing of Hindu priest all point out towards an obvious effort to appease and mobilize the minorities.[50]

The Naxal movement, despite its recent spectacular success, suffers from some inherent weaknesses. At the ideological level, idea of freedom is essential for any popular insurrection. Aiming to foster a revolution in a democracy is inherently difficult. No political system is perfect however, Democracy, despite its flaws, has undoubtedly proven to be better than any other system. As one commentator argues, "The fact is, democracy does offer institutions and instrumentalities of social transformation and, however inefficient these may be in a particular situation, and they are ordinarily more effective than the option of directionless and largely randomized violence."[51]

What Naxals plan to achieve by the so-called new democratic revolution and subsequent socialism, has failed as a system the world over. Symbolically, the fall of the Berlin Wall marked an eclipse of communism. The success of the West, its economic prosperity, freedom and military might raised questions about the desirability of communism as it failed to match the progress of the West. Communism survived for more than 70 years in the Soviet Union, but left the people seriously disillusioned. What exists today in China is a State controlled capitalism with limited freedom and liberty.

The dependence on base areas is another major weakness of the movement. The inability of the Naxals to go beyond their safe havens and carry out propaganda in areas where government administrative machinery functions seriously hinders expansion of the movement. Efforts by Naxals to mobilize masses outside base areas often leads to violence and ironically, the largest proportion of the victims of this violence are drawn from the very classes and communities they claim to be representing.

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50. "Maoist resent Hinduism among tribals". http://naxalwatch. blogspot.com /2008_10_26_archive.html. ( accessed November 25, 2010)

51. Ajay Sahni, "Naxalism the Retreat of Civil Government," South *Asian Terrorism Portal*. http://www.satp.org/satporgtp /publication/faultlines/volume5/Fault5-7asahni.htm. (accessed November 25, 2010).

The movement despite the preponderance of adivasis and dalits continue to be led by a few intellectual elite, who have engineered their agenda to appeal to the locals but differ fundamentally in their ultimate objectives. A close examination of the movement will reveal that the marginalized take up arms only to break down the insensitive establishment, which has failed to deliver an egalitarian society. The Naxal leadership may talk about 'deliverance of the proletariat from the neo-liberalist bourgeoisie, and the dawn of New Democracy', but such phrases mean little to the adivasis and dalits. They are in the battle only because of their disillusionment with the status quo. Thus while the movement may continue to thrive till the time the leadership is able to relate to local issues extension beyond the tribal regions will require mass indoctrination, a break from the past legacies, a social awakening, and still the aim may remain unfulfilled because awakening and mobilization is a double-edged weapon. Paradoxically, it may raise questions related to the legitimacy of the movement and correctness of the methods.

Some people cite the experience of the Maoists in Nepal as an example of military strength turning into a political force in a favorable political situation and hope that the Maoists in India will achieve a similar feat. The contexts of Nepal and India are quite different. In Nepal, the whole battle is for the establishment of a constitutional republic, a stage that India has long passed through. The inability to create pan Indian mass organizations and support base also affects the Naxals capability of conducting large-scale operations beyond their base areas. Direct confrontation with the security forces without vast public support is likely to prove disastrous and can lead to their total annihilation similar to what happened to Lankan Tamil Tigers Elam (LTTE). LTTE in Sri Lanka despite of its strong historical roots, massive military prowess and undeniable popular support, met with total defeat in the one-dimensional war it launched against the state.

# Government Response

The initial understanding of the problem by the government had centered on the concept of Law and Order. In accordance with the resultant police approach, the response to Naxalism was state specific with limited involvement of the central government. The flow and ebb of the movement in the initial years was thus more a result of inherent Naxal weaknesses rather than a result of any comprehensive state or central policy. In the absence of any long-term policy, lack of effective governance and rampant local level corruption and exploitation, the Naxals soon exploited the local grievances and were able to establish popular support amongst the marginalized.

## The Beginning of a New Response

The alarming rate of expansion and the rising tide of violence led to a change in the attitude and response of the government. The Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh while describing the Naxal movement as a socio-economic problem commented, "Our strategy has to be to walk on two legs – to have an effective police response while focusing on reducing the sense of depravation."[52] The government policy thus primarily focuses on a strong military response coupled with an effort to address the issue simultaneously on political, security, development, and public perception management fronts in a holistic manner.[53] The policy aims at strengthening the governmental control over the Naxal affected areas by enhancing security, modernization of state police forces, promoting local resistance groups like Selva Judam, establishing an effective surrender and rehabilitation policy in all states, and effective use of the media to win over the contested population. On the development front, the central government wants the state governments to accord a higher priority in their annual plans to ensure faster socio-economic development of the Naxal affected areas. They also want state governments to carry out distribution of land to the landless poor as part of land reforms, ensure development of physical infrastructure like roads,

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52. Sudeep Chakravarti, *Red Sun, Travels in Naxalite Country* (New Delhi: Penguin Books 2008), 172-173.

53. South Asian Terrorism Portal, "Status paper on Naxal Problem," http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/ countries/india/ document/papers/06mar13_naxal%20problem%20.htm (accessed November 30, 2010)

communication, power etc, and provide employment opportunities to the youth in these areas.[54] The central government also feels that negotiations should be carried out only once the Naxal groups agree to give up violence and arms.

## Security Initiative

The present government policy rests on the twin pillars of security and development. The steps undertaken to enhance security includes a security related expenditure scheme. The scheme envisages reimbursing the expenditure incurred by the state on ammunition, training and up gradation of police posts. At present, the central government is reimbursing the entire cost incurred on these expanses to the states.

The next initiative deals with strengthening of law enforcement in Naxal affected states. The Naxal affected states have been sanctioned India Reserve battalions mainly to strengthen the security apparatus at their level as also to enable the states to provide gainful employment to the youth, particularly in the Naxal areas. In order to supplement the efforts of the states in providing an effective response to the Naxal violence, Central Police Forces (CPF) are being deployed on a long-term basis as requested by the affected states. The central government has also exempted the states from the payment of a part of the cost of deployment of these forces. To prevent spillover effect of the activities of Nepalese Maoists to India, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has been given the responsibility to guard the Indo-Nepal Border.

Under the Police Modernization Scheme, funds are being allotted to modernize state police forces in terms of modern weaponry, latest communication equipment, mine- protected vehicles and other infrastructure. Efforts are also on to identify and fortify vulnerable police stations and outposts in the Naxal areas.

Another, albeit a bit controversial, step in strengthening security apparatus in the states has been the government support to Selva Judam (peace march in the local language). Selva Judam started in 2005

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54. Ibid.

as a people's resistance movement against the Naxals in Chhattisgarh. Initially it was based on genuine resentment of some adivasis who felt marginalized by the Naxals. However, soon this movement received bi-partisan support from both the opposition and ruling parties and a few years later, the state government of Chhattisgarh adopted Selwa Judum in order to restore democratic rule to the affected regions. The state over the years has trained a number Special Police Officers, from amongst the adivasis, who are part of Selwa Judum in the state. [55] The clashes between Naxals and Selva Judam have led to a cycle of violence and retaliation that has left a large number of villagers homeless. With reports of human right violations from both sides it has generated an environment of mistrust, which has forced a large number of villagers into make shift refugee camps.

## The Development Effort and Legal Protection

As part of the development plans, the central government has provided financial assistance to Naxal affected districts under the Backward Districts Initiative to fill in the critical gaps in physical and social development in the Naxal affected areas. Connected to development is the issue of tribal rights. In order to address this concern, the government has enacted a number of laws. As early as 1989, Prevention of Atrocities Act was passed to prevent atrocities against the tribes and to ensure effective participation of the tribals in the process of planning and decision-making. In 1996, the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act was introduced and Gram Sabha (village council) got the highest authority to decide over the natural resource including the authority to collect, process, transport and market non timber forest produce freely. The most important act though has been The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. This particular act empowers tribals by giving them security of tenure, access to minor forest produce, and a big stake in the preservation of natural spaces. In order to improve means of livelihood and provide protection to the

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55. Planning Commission, *Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas*, 49.

poorest of poor the Central Government has also passed the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which guarantees 100 days employment to the poor in rural areas. [56]

The government has also made efforts to improve rehabilitation of the displaced. The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 is a significant step in dealing with discontent, unrest and tension arising out of widespread forcible displacement.

## The Shortcomings

The present government policy, also popularly called as the clear, hold, and develop strategy, may suggest an integrated and coherent policy based on a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the situation. Unfortunately, there is not only lack of consensus and unity regarding the policy, but also a wide gap between policy formulation and actual implementation on ground. As one commentator argues, "India and her Parliament are not asleep; they are simply confused and oftentimes deluded. The strategic and tactical discourse has been carried out, overwhelmingly, at a theoretical, or even wishful, plane, entirely divorced from the realities of the ground. The most powerful arguments advanced are not for consistent and effective response, but in favor of inaction, vacillation and perpetual deferral."[57] Most policies and strategies thus end up as slogans and catchphrases, which serve no other purpose other than political mobilization during elections.

The root cause, as per the popular discourse in India, is the issue of development.[58] To put it simply Naxalism is a result of lack of development. The prognosis may not be theoretically wrong however if the problem was so simple than two-questions arise, firstly why no emphasis was laid on development earlier and secondly, why large areas under government control remain underdeveloped? A simple but often overlooked factor in all social and political problems is the inherent dependence of all

56.  Ibid, 57-58.

57.  Ajai Sahni,"Counter Insurgency Some Myths and Principles," South Asian Terrorism Portal. http://www.satp.org/satporgtp /ajaisahni/2010/presantionjune2.htm.(accessed November 30, 2010).

58. NDTV, "Address Root Causes of Naxalism," http://www.ndtv.com/news/india/address-root-causes-of-naxalism-sonia-25645.php. (accessed November 30, 2010).

relevant actors, whether the political class, bureaucracy, masses, media or the aggrieved on the basic moral and social values of the society. These values not only affect the attitude of the masses but also have a bearing on their conduct. A recent planning commission report argued that since large sections of bureaucracy and technocracy constituting the delivery system come from landowning dominant castes or well to do middle classes they have a superiority complex which influences their attitudes, behavior and performance. Since politics has also been aligned with this social segment, the coalition of interests and social background deeply affects governance at all levels.[59]

Upon independence, India chose democracy as a political system but was not able to incorporate the democratic temperament. Thus, while democracy as a political system is flourishing equality and justice are not. Almost all political parties champion the cause of democracy but are hardly democratic in their internal functioning. Debate and difference of opinion is outwardly encouraged but is internally despised. Lord Acton in 1887 remarked, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." In India, power is an end in itself. Media, the corporate world, industrialists, and intellectuals all tend to gravitate towards power. There are two worlds one idealistic, which is moral, ethical, and based on ideals of justice, the other realistic where, power and self-interest dictate conduct and behavior. It is therefore not surprising that even amongst the deprived only a few who break the class divide remember their own plight and work at improving the lot of their own type. Most cherish their acceptance and very soon become a part of the elite, clearly exhibiting a tendency towards personal growth as opposed to growth of the community or society. This deep-rooted colonial mindset is thus the biggest hurdle towards ideals of equality and justice, and in turn adversely affects good governance, effective implementation, and social development.

Recently, a very critical report of the planning commission of India titled *Development challenges in extremist affected areas* has, for the first time criticized the lack of governance and adverse socio-economic conditions for rising extremism in India. Describing the growing inequality in India the

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59. Planning Commission, *Development Challenges In Extremist Affected Areas,* 22.

report claims "we have two worlds of education, two worlds of health, two worlds of transport and two worlds of housing, with a gaping divide in between." [60]While defining Naxalism as a socio-economic problem the expert group has strongly recommended the dissolution of Selva Judam and criticized the stated government policy of no negotiations with Naxal groups until they cease violence and give up arms.

Some other reasons which, effect good governance and administration are the lack of transparency and accountability in government functioning, absence of performance appraisal, non-existence of a system of incentives and penalties, understaffing, poor working conditions, corruption, and large-scale leakages.

60. Ibid,1

# Employment of the Army

The growing frustration due to unabated Naxal violence and bankruptcy of effective implementable solutions often leads to voices within the corridors of power to ask for employment of the army. Sections of the media and intelligentsia are openly advocating a military solution. Opinion polls by news channels clearly indicate a strong constituency especially amongst the urban elite who support the employment of the army.[61] Many of them cite Sri Lanka's war against LTTE as a relevant example. It is true that war is an extension of state policy and military the instrument for implementation. However, all insurgencies are different with unique motivations, characteristics and solutions. The objective of any military is to maximize violence whenever and wherever called for; even if actual violence is not used, the threat of violence is inherent in its employment. Hence, the question of employment of the army against Naxals merits attention from both the normative and empirical perspectives.

## The Question of Norms and Ethics

Naxalism as an ideology is opposed to the Indian political system and by extension to the constitution and is therefore an enemy of the state. However, as discussed earlier, Naxalism is also a voice of the exploited and a socio-economic problem. Most Naxal followers and sympathizers are the deprived and aggrieved sections of the society who have been exploited and denied their rightful due. Thus their dissatisfaction and disenchantment stems from genuine grievances. The focus thus, has to be, to fight Naxalism as an ideology and not Naxalites who primarily comprise the adivasis, dalits and other marginalized sections of the society. Since in many cases Naxals deliver, what state has been unable to provide, it does enjoy a fair bit of popularity. Any coercive action and violence, which military actions involve to exert control will not only be counterproductive but will also strengthen the fault lines between these sections and the state.

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61. NDTV, "Time to Change Tactics against Naxals." http://www.ndtv.com/news/india/chidambaram-exclusively-speaks-to-ndtv-26152.php.(accessed November 30, 2010).

Many commentators, while dismissing the normative issue cite the case of Jammu and Kashmir. However, both the environment and the context differ in these two cases. The insurgency in Jammu Kashmir is driven by external support, has an aim to secede and is propped by a large number of foreign terrorists. Naxals on the other hand especially the ranks are their because of socio-economic causes. The Naxalites are the sons of the soil and until their local grievances are addressed, will lack neither motivation nor popular support. Thus, legitimizing use of force in the public perception without exhausting other sources of state power will be difficult and can make the situation worse.

## Military Options: Some Criticalities

Robert Thomson defines "the need for government to have a clear political aim" as the first principle of a successful counter-insurgency campaign. Military action in counter insurgency can be effective only if it is backed by a coherent strategy, has clearly defined objectives and end states, and there is unity of action and purpose. Unfortunately, there seems to be no unanimity on these issues; particularly so, there lacks consensus and unity about the issue of giving priority to either development or police action. The Home Minister of India recently articulated that the "The debate on what should take place first - development or police action is misplaced, both are essential and there can be no fixed prescription."[62] He may be correct in his analysis but faces opposition not only from the affected state governments but also from his own cabinet colleagues.

Political compulsions may be at the core of this argument; however, the question merits some attention at the conceptual level also. There is no ambiguity that development and prosperity prevents spread of insurgency. However, most often the word development is often used as a catch phrase. As one commentator argues, "It is tantamount to saying that the 'solution' to poverty is wealth; or the 'solution'

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62. Express News Service, "PC's Naxal strategy: Development, Action." http://www.indianexpress.com /news/pcs-naxal-strategy-development-action/610535/. (accessed November 30, 2010).

to disease is good health." [63] For development, you need control, effective implementation and good governance. Even then, no government in history has out-developed an insurgency. Moreover, a critical look at socio-economic indicators will show that an ever-expanding population, poverty, illiteracy, and lack of higher education will make the development in future much more difficult. Long-term administrative erosion has resulted in a quantitative situation of a near collapse. The resource pool of the distressed and dissatisfied is India is too large and will always remain available to the insurgents. [64]

Even if we accept the development paradigm, it has two major implications for the employment of the army. Firstly, the lack of consensus and unity in this respect directly affects the ability of the army to operate. In the absence of uniform laws for arrest, prosecution and rules of engagement, which is contingent to implementation of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in all states, the army will be severely handicapped to carry out effective operations against insurgents. Secondly, effects of development take time to manifest which implies a long and protracted deployment, which the army cannot afford.

## Legal Issues and Phases of Employment

In India, the army can be employed to quell internal disturbances, once the affected state government has declared an area as disturbed and sent a formal request to the central government. The central government imposes the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, which legitimizes the presence of military forces and their actions during emergencies. These rules and laws though criticized by many Human Right proponents are essential for effective functioning.

Counterinsurgency operations have three distinct phases clear, hold and build. [65] The clear phase, commences when insurgent violence has led to complete breakdown of state machinery and the army, is deployed. Offensive operations are predominant in this stage and the aim is to create a secure physical

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63.Ajai Sahni, "Counterinsurgency Some Myths and Principles," South Asian Terrorism Portal. http://www.satp.org/satporgtp /ajaisahni/2010/ presantionjune2.htm. (accessed December 28, 2010).

64. Ibid

65. Tactics in Counterinsurgency; *Field Manuals*, 3-24.2

and psychological environment. In the hold phase, the violence levels and residual insurgent military capability can be effectively handled by state and central police forces, though the army maintains a precautionary stance. The build phase, is reached when insurgent activity is at its nadir and the gains of military operations are consolidated upon through developmental activities. The civil administration holds the centre stage in this phase. Thus, the success of a counterinsurgency strategy depends on not only military actions but also on the ability of the civil administration to consolidate the gains made by the army and to exploit the improved security situation to win the trust of the population. In absence of this vital complimentary action, military gains can soon become useless and lead to a stalemate and protracted deployment with no exit strategy.

## Dynamics of Employment

Based on experiences of the army's deployment in the Northeast and Jammu and Kashmir, effective counterinsurgency is based on company operating base (COB) dependent grids with approximately a brigade spreading over a district. The grid is established in a manner such that the entire area is effectively dominated. It not only prevents freedom of action to the insurgents but also helps in maintaining initiative. Taking this as a standard, theoretically to dominate the Naxal affected areas throughout India approximately 200 brigades will be required, which is neither practicable nor feasible.

A possible argument can be to deploy the army in the worst affected regions only and leave other areas to the local police. However, such an arrangement is destined to fail for without saturating the area the Naxalites can simply shift base to different areas. With time, initiative, and local support at their disposal, the Naxalites can choose when to avoid security forces and when to give battle. Besides, to have any chance of success this arrangement will need a unified command structure preferably under the military commander on ground. The unified command would require executive authority over various forces involved in counterinsurgency. As the ethos, culture and the way of functioning of the army differs from the local police and Para-military forces this arrangement is bound to create legal and procedural issues especially as police forces of various states are going to be involved.

Success of counterinsurgency operations rests largely on availability of actionable intelligence. Theoretically, it would require a joint intelligence cell where info gained from various sources can be synthesized and utilized for not only conducting tactical operations but also for continuously monitoring the effect of own operations. However, lack of government presence and popular support enjoyed by Naxals in these areas make intelligence gathering a difficult proposition. Establishing an effective intelligence grid will require winning the confidence of the local population for which a protracted presence of the security forces on ground is essential. Finally, selective employment will also suffer from the requirement of maintaining strenuous lines of communication and logistics passing through Naxal held areas. This will not only require additional troops but will also deny the freedom of action to army columns operating in remote areas and jungles.

The protracted employment of the army in Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast has already led to shorter peace tenures and faster rates of deployment.[66] This has resulted in longer separation of troops from families, which in today's social context puts enormous mental and psychological strain on the troops. Besides the psychological strain, frequent deployment in counterinsurgency operations also affects training and preparation for conventional operations. Keeping in mind the geo-political realities and unresolved borders on two fronts, India can ill afford to neglect competence in conventional operations.

Defeating an insurgency militarily is difficult, and requires large number of troops in a protracted deployment, resources, ability to sustain losses, and, above all, undivided focus on the root causes of the insurgency. The decision of employing the army from both the normative and empirical perspective is fraught with risks and needs to be avoided. As Ajay Sahni argues, the army should never be involved.[67] However, if the situation deteriorates rapidly the government will have no choice but to employ the army. This will be a unique challenge for the army and will require a different mindset and strategy. Although, the experiences gained in countering and defeating other insurgencies will be crucial

66. Rumel Dahiya, "Anti-Naxal Operation: Employment of Armed forces." IDSA Issue Brief, 2010. http://www.idsa.in/system/files/IB_Anti-NaxalOperations_04052010.pdf. (accessed November 30, 2010).

67. "Any Strategy has to be a Five Year Plan" Interview with Ajay Sahni, *Frontline,* November 6, 2009. http://pay.hindu.com/ebook%20-%20ebfl20091106.pdf (accessed January 6, 2011).

any template-based response will have to be avoided. Thus while the military continues contributing in capacity building through training, intelligence and by providing logistic support, there is also a need for military planners to continuously monitor and plan for the contingency where army is deployed to counter Naxalism.

# Recommendations

The issues, which sustain Naxalism, are much beyond the reasons of depravation and exploitation alone. Naxalism is also a reflection of the government's failure to mitigate socio-economic inequalities. At the ideological level, it is a reflection of the deep-rooted colonial mindset which large sections of the society have not been able to shed despite more than half a century of democratic rule. While there is a definite movement in deepening of liberal values especially amongst the urban population, old degenerated values and beliefs still predominate the rural landscape of India. Hence, any cohesive and comprehensive response to Naxalism has to be, not only multi –pronged but should also be addressed at various levels.

At the ideological level, there is a need to propagate and disseminate values of liberalism, equality and justice, which needs to be assimilated by the entire society. At the level of the government, there is a need to make the government accountable, transparent and effective. There should also be improved program implementation and revamp of the criminal prosecution system to provide effective justice. Operationally there is a need to ensure unity of effort and to balance the concurrent needs of development and police action, and finally, at the lowest level there is a need to train, equip, and modernize the local police and to make the local administration more responsive and efficient.

## The Ideological Challenge

Upon independence, the constitution guaranteed the principles of liberty, equality and justice. However, in absence of a democratic tradition, the entrenched classes were soon able to subvert the ideals of justice and equality and have since then used democracy as a tool to consolidate power. In the absence

of education, awakening, and mass mobilization of democratic ideals, prevalent practices have became accepted norms. Until now, caste and tribal structures have not been broken; worse, there is a strong nexus between the caste leadership and political structure, which prevents any meaningful reforms. There is hence a need to educate and mobilize masses for which all government and non-government organizations including media has to play a major role.

Historically, the trend of caste and group based loyalties was optimally exploited by the British, who were able to achieve unquestioned loyalty from Indian army units based on martial castes and unique ethnicities. Considered as strength by many, this trend becomes counterproductive, when caste and group based loyalties start affecting transparency, accountability and good governance. Caste loyalties and ideals of equality and justice can coexist only if caste loyalties are subservient to the ideals of equality and justice.

A silent but steady transformation is already in place. In recent years, the phenomenon of deepening of democracy has led to caste and group based empowerment. The next logical step in this transformation has to be empowerment as individuals, which given the present condition may take time and will require a concerted effort  in the fields of education, reestablishing faith in the institutions of law and justice, transparency in functioning, and greater accountability in administration .

## Governance

At the governmental level, the biggest challenge is to ensure transparency and accountability in functioning. In a recent interview with "Wall Street Journal," the home minister of India candidly admitted to governance and ethical deficit in some quarters.[68] Corruption is slowly becoming a way of life and this trend needs to be arrested. Popular catchphrases and slogans do not succeed in countering insurgency. A top down approach is required, for which the political class needs to lead by example. Corruption needs to become a high-risk low gain endeavor for which strict laws and effective prosecution

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68.TNN, "There is governance and ethical deficit admits Chidambram,"*Times of India* , February 12,2011.http://timesofindia. indiatimes.com/india/ There-is-governance-and-ethical-deficit-admits-Chidambaram/articleshow/7479866.cms. (accessed Feburary 11, 2011).

is necessary. The initiative taken by the government in enacting the Right to Information Act, 2005 is a good step in this direction and will go a long way in promoting transparency provided the factors that impede its enforcement are removed.

Judicial reforms and prosecution is another area, which needs urgent attention. The present judicial system not only suffers from delays and backlogs but corruption as well. The primary causes of corruption (in Judiciary) are delays in the disposal of cases, shortage of judges and complex procedures, all of which are exacerbated by a preponderance of new laws.[69] These circumstances make seeking justice by the poor almost impossible, because they have neither the resources nor the time to wait for a long drawn judicial process. Kangaroo courts run by the Naxals thus become popular, for besides being approachable they offer instant justice. The recent effort by the government to open up rural courts to address the issues of delayed justice is a welcome step in the direction of providing justice. However, extreme caution is required to ensure that like so many other institutions, the rural courts do not get entangled in bureaucratic and complex legal procedures and hence become another tool for exploitation of the poor.

For close to 52% population involved in agriculture, land remains an emotive issue. Despite many policies and legislative protection for dalits, adivasis and other marginalized sections of the society, no action has been taken to carry out a redistribution of land. To put the situation in perspective, in China 43% of the cultivable land has been redistributed; South Korea-32 % and in Japan-33%. In comparison, India has distributed only 1.25% of land.[70] The uprising in Naxalbari was primarily a struggle for land, the movement may have transformed but land remains a critical issue. Hence, there is an urgent need to address the issue of land distribution even if it means legislative action.

Since the goals of the movement are political, it needs to be addressed politically as well. Negotiation is the only political instrument of such a response in a democracy. An ameliorative approach

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69. Transparency International, *Global Corruption report 2007*,http://ipc498a.files.wordpress.com /2008/01/indolence-in-india_s-judiciary.pdf. (accessed February 20, 2011).

70.  Prakash Singh, *The Naxalite Movement In India* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 1995), 233.

with emphasis on a negotiated solution helps to generate greater confidence amongst alienated people in governance. The recent efforts at negotiations have reflected a stubborn attitude by the Naxal groups .This should not dissuade governments from talking to various factions and influential adivasi leaders with regional or limited influence. Any success anywhere will go a long way in dividing and weakening the overall movement.

Socio-economic conditions are dynamic they evolve with time. The government should not only resort to short term solutions but also plan for the future. Thus instead of creating bogus jobs through employment guarantee schemes, India needs to create genuine jobs through private enterprise. To do this India needs to reform labor laws, encourage entrepreneurship, push massive skills training through public private partnerships and improve higher education. India's current high growth may take it to middle-income status. However, to progress beyond that, there is a need to develop infrastructure and an industrial base, and not rely solely on services to drive growth.

## The Operational Approach

The debate on the merging of police action and development has been in vogue in academic and policy circles with respect to strategies and techniques for fighting insurgencies. Both development and police action are interdependent. You cannot develop what you do not hold. In other words, there is no development without security and no security without development. Hence, the main challenge before the government is to effectively merge these strategies at the grass root level.

The primary task is to reclaim control of the Naxal affected areas. The task involves not only removing the influence of Naxals but also of the criminal co-operative of petty contractors, landlords, businessmen and forest officials. The administrative vacuum in vast Naxal affected areas has to be filled, and the areas that have presently been abandoned to the depredations of the Naxals will have to be systematically recovered, re-occupied, and brought under the institutions of civil and democratic

governance.[71] The quest for control may require assistance from the central police forces to start with but the ultimate aim should to empower the local police by building inherent capabilities.

Besides modernization and training of police forces, there is a need to reestablish local level intelligence networks. Infrastructure like roads besides providing employment can go a long way in improving police reaction and diminishing Naxal influence in inaccessible areas. While consolidating its own control it is also essential to weaken and destroy the insurgents support base. Since the battle is for the human domain surgical operations based on precise information should be preferred over large scale, high visibility operations. Selective targeting of ideology driven Naxal leaders can achieve this aim without affecting the population. There is also a requirement of exploiting the existing rift amongst factions. Maoist propaganda needs to be countered with own psychological operations which should focus on firstly exposing the inherent paradoxes in the aims and objectives and secondly at winning the hearts and minds of the disenchanted.

The psychological operations should also be supported by affirmative action on ground. Local level government functionaries will have to shed bureaucratic and administrative lethargy and be transparent in their conducts. To connect and to regain the confidence of the population enormous flexibility will also have to be introduced into the existing administrative order. Some of the cumbersome bureaucratic procedures may have to be modified. There may be a need to confer magisterial powers on the officers of the revenue and developmental agencies so that small matters can be settled locally. Economic issues also need adequate attention the government has enacted a number of laws to provide economic security; there is a need to effectively implement these policies so that the benefits can reach the affected. Rural courts and micro finance schemes are some steps in the right direction.

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71.  Ajai Sahni, "Counterinsurgency Some Myths and Principles,"   http://www.satp.org/ satporgtp/ajaisahni/2010/  presantionjune2.htm.(accessed February 25, 2011).

## Modernization of Police Forces

The state police forces with the assistance of central police forces have been fighting the Naxals in most states. Despite increase in deployment of troops, the fatalities and incidents of Naxal violence are on the increase. "Police" and "law and order" are state subjects under Schedule VII of the Constitution of India and hence improving the functioning of police forces is primarily a state responsibility. However, due to lack of funds and government apathy most state police forces lack training, equipment, fitness, ethos and necessary tactical and firing skills to confront and defeat the Naxals. To meet these challenges there is an urgent need to revamp state police forces by modernizing weaponry, communication and infrastructure, and improving resources, mobility and intelligence. Due effort is also required for development of a real-time and effective police training system. Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare College at Kanker in Chhattisgarh is an effective step in this direction. Andhra Pradesh has also developed a special anti-Naxal force called "Greyhounds" which has been very effective and has delivered the desired result. In line with the Greyhounds, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is raising 10 battalions of a special anti-Naxal force, which is being especially equipped and trained for anti-Naxal operations. Likewise, there is a need for imparting specialized training to State police forces to counter the Naxals. Other actions, which merit attention, are filling up of all vacant police vacancies, increasing the police to population ration and police reforms related to officering, tenures and performance appraisals.

# Conclusion

The recent events in Egypt and the Middle East are a testimony to the human desire for freedom and opportunity. Depending on cultural and socio-political context, each nation needs to adopt a system, which can balance the social, cultural and political aspirations of the people. India achieved the universal objectives of freedom and equality long back and since then has enjoyed a stable democratic system. However, like all democratic systems, the Indian democracy also needs time to mature.

India enjoys a unique status in the world, not only because of its rich history and growing economic status but also because of its transitional society, where East meets the West. In India, it is not a clash of civilizations but a synthesis of cultures and ideas. Unfortunately, since right conduct and actions are often difficult and time consuming, this synthesis of ideas propelled by selfish interests has led to anarchy of justice and equality. Without the anchor of dharma-based restraint, greed and parochial interests are driving human conduct and has led to an ever-widening gap between the haves and have-nots.

Naxalism is not only a socio-economic problem but also a response to the growing inequality between the rich and the poor. The theoretical premise of Naxalism might appear to be based on equality and justice, but its practice of violence and terror contributes but little to justice and is counterproductive for growth and development of the society. Since the final objective of the movement is political, question of norms, ethics and individual liberty often become subservient to the interests of movement. Thus, what Naxalism aims to achieve is no different from what exists today, for no matter what system we adopt the key players and basic values do not change. Over the years, the, Naxal movement has become conspiratorial and violent, relying on terror struck by its guerrilla squads, rather than peasant mobilization. The steps necessary to sustain the movement, unfortunately strengthens the same evils, which it seeks to eliminate.

The inherent paradoxes in the ideology and actions of Naxals, and the generally docile nature of the Indian masses will most likely limit its growth. Moreover, as Prakash Singh argues, "Indian state with

all its failings is not a banana republic. It has enormous strength and, once its leaders make up their minds, most lethal terrorist movements can be stamped out."[72] However, no one should count on the innate tolerance of the masses as a policy prescription for inaction or perpetual deferral. The growing awareness and resulting frustrations from lack of equal opportunities are bound to foster social unrest, which can be exploited by subversive elements. Signs of the notorious British policy of divide and rule are still evident. Divisive and caste based politics, rallying minority fears; sub- nationalism and regionalism are not healthy trends and are often counterproductive for equitable growth, development and prosperity.

To regain its rightful place in the comity of nations India needs inclusive and equitable growth. It needs consensus at the political level. Notwithstanding political compulsions, interests and objectives of political parties should be aligned with national interests. India needs nationalism built on equality, liberty, compassion and tolerance, not accommodation based on appeasement of minorities. The result of failure to meet these fundamental challenges may not be evident in the short run, but until addressed will continue to breed unrest and dissatisfaction, which keeps the potential for insurgency alive.

The response to Naxalism has to be multidimensional. While at the ideological level, the old colonial and feudal mindset still prevalent in rural areas needs to be broken, the operational approach needs a blend of firm but sophisticated handling of Naxal violence with sensitive handling of the socio-economic and developmental issues. The gap between policies and their implementation needs to be bridged by an effective and responsive delivery mechanism.

The apolitical, Indian army is highly respected for its discipline and professionalism. It not only portrays the diversity of the nation but also best signifies its unity in diversity. The Indian army has a vast and rich experience in fighting insurgencies and sub-conventional operations. However, while the capability for full spectrum operations is essential, over indulgence in counterinsurgency operations not only leads to battle fatigue but also effects the preparation for conventional operations. In addition, there

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72. Prakash Singh, *The Naxalite Movement In India* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 1995), 255.

are normative and empirical concerns, which merit attention before any large-scale commitment is made in counterinsurgency operations.

Notwithstanding the concerns enumerated above the army continues to be the last resort of the government. Since independence, the Indian army has a proven track- record of successfully culminating a number of insurgencies. Although all insurgencies are different, the experiences gained in the North East and Jammu and Kashmir will be vital in formulating an effective operational approach. Even then, given the prevailing geo-strategic environment and existing deployment of the army, it will be imperative to have clearly defined political objectives and an exit strategy, for the army can ill afford a stalemate and another protracted deployment.

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AFSPA | Armed Forces Special Powers Act |
| AICCR | All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries |
| CCOMPOSA | Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties of South Asia |
| COB | Company Operating Base |
| COBRA | Combat Battalion for Resolute Action |
| COIN | Counter Insurgency |
| CPI | Communist Party of India |
| CPI (M) | Communist Party of India Marxist |
| CPI (M-L) | Communist Party of India Marxist Leninist |
| CPI (Maoist) | Communist Part of India Maoist |
| CRPF | Central Reserve Police Force |
| CRZ | Compact Revolutionary Zone |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| LeT | Lashkar-e-Taiba (Terror Group based in Pakistan) |
| LTTE | Lankan Tamil Tigers Elam |
| MCC | Maoist Communist Center |
| PLGA | Peoples Liberation Guerilla Army |
| PWG | Peoples War Group |
| ULFA | United Liberation Front of Assam |

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